

Memo
re The Watergate Caper
Augst 29, 1972

As the Watergate affair appears to move more into the open and become ever more complicated, it might be well to keep in mind a factor of unknown weight which has been present from the beginning. This is ^{the} spontaneous inference we both have drawn, a continent apart, of a note of panic and desperation in the reactions by the GOP-White House high command. If this is as genuine as it appears, it means they are reacting as victims as well as villains in this scene, and as victims of something they feel they cannot control, of something more than their own guilty knowledge, confusion and campaign pressures. All these were present in the ITT case, when there were few comparable hints of such pervading panic. The difference in response to the two situations corresponds to that between a routine scandal and a disaster.

If they have been had, the question is by whom? Who besides the Democrats might anticipate benefit from leading the GOP brass into a trap, one that could lead to their defeat in November? Forgetting Democrat confusion and disorganization, could they conceivably plot a trap using Bay of Pigs veterans? Hardly.

Any hypothesis to explain motive and method ⁱⁿ what has happened breaks down, of course, with all government agencies except one. The FBI, for instance, is simply an agency of the Department of Justice in this situation, especially of this department under Mitchell and Kleindienst.

On the other hand the CIA remains the one agency with some functioning autonomy, and conceivably could envision its own Bureau-crat future as more promising under a weak and disorganized McGovern administration, chronically at odds with Congress and the military, than in a continuation of the known trends of the Nixon administration. These trends include harsher domestic controls of all types (to which the CIA would have no objection IF it could control them) and, if Nazi Germany is any precedent, a natural and growing alliance with the armed services. The CIA is accustomed to making ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ historical parallels and correlations. It knows Nixon has appeased the military, which will demand still more. The rising star of Gen. Alexander Haig presumably has not gone unnoticed. Professional armed services are in the making, meaning ~~and~~ a more motivated, dynamic military bureaucracy with which Nixon can ally himself.

In the past two years it has become apparent that the CIA has the goods to clobber anyone if it chooses to use them or arrange for them to be used. Whether the CIA had anything to do with the Pentagon Papers, in their various versions, is irrelevant. They came off best, and it shows what can be done.

Assume that, for reasons of insuring its own future through the normal political process of weakening potential rivals or combinations of rivals, the CIA decided Nixon has to be eliminated. The Watergate Caper is a splendid election year device in that it makes the real target look like the villain who is persecuting what may be the incidental beneficiary. The resources and talent available are beyond question. The pitfall into which the GOP may have been maneuvered requires, in theory, key figures in only two places -- one in the GOP high command to sell the idea of an espionage project in some form or other, and another in the Watergate complex to set the scene for the springing of the trap.

Hunt and Colson, both in the White House, both have CIA backgrounds. Hunt appears ~~ing~~ to be losing his amazing immunity at this point and may turn out to be one of those who will be "sacrificed." Colson remains an unknown quantity. Along with the possibility that he planted the trap is the other side of the same coin, that he might have been led down the garden path along with a good many others.

Frank Wills, the Watergate guard who reportedly discovered the taped doorlocks, was employed by General Security Services, Inc., but little else has been printed on his background. He says he found tape across two doorlocks on the underground garage, thought the maintenance people had done it, took it off, then returned 10 minutes later on a hunch and found them taped again. So were two others on a lower level that had not been taped before. He then says he called police in a call logged at 1:52 a.m. June 17. Police found doors taped on the eighth and top floor, then more on the sixth, when they found the Watergate Five.

This is Wills' story. His alone, as far as I can see. Only the call to the police can be checked. If he did all the taping himself, who could prove it? Is he still around at his \$80 a week job? Is his life worth a plugged nickel as far as refugee Cubans are concerned? Or is he perfectly safe? No one needed help to get in, not with a locksmith along; The complex had had many previous break-ins and robberies. Nor was tape needed, except as a possible excuse to call the cops.

This is far out, but may have more consistency as to motive and methods than other explanations offered thus far. It is set down purely as an hypothesis to be tested as more is learned.

If the Bay of Pigs veterans turn out to be somewhat expendable, that is not exactly a new experience for them, and they do seem to be well paid for their various tribulations. And if our only independent bureaucracy turns out to be following the first law of real politik -- insuring its own survival and strategic dominance -- that blazes no new trail either.

Criticism, suggestions, alternatives welcomed.